

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 3 and beginning "The above-described techniques can be implemented in digital electronic circuitry" with the following amended paragraph:

The above-described techniques can be implemented in digital electronic circuitry, or in computer hardware, firmware, software, or in combinations of them. The implementation can be as a computer program product, i.e., a computer program tangibly embodied in ~~an information carrier, e.g., in~~ a machine readable storage device ~~or in a propagated signal~~, for execution by, or to control the operation of, data processing apparatus, e.g., a programmable processor, a computer, or multiple computers. A computer program can be written in any form of programming language, including compiled or interpreted languages, and it can be deployed in any form, including as a stand alone program or as a module, component, subroutine, or other unit suitable for use in a computing environment. A computer program can be deployed to be executed on one computer or on multiple computers at one site or distributed across multiple sites and interconnected by a communication network.